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THE WYOMING PLAN OF MILITARY TRAINING FOR THE SCHOOLS

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I shall first present a short historical outline of the Wyoming plan. In 1911 we introduced military training into the public schools of Cheyenne, Wyoming. At the time there was little idea of preparedness in the country and we immediately met with every kind of opposition: opposition on the part of parents who did not want their boys to be soldiers; opposition on the part of women's clubs; opposition on the part of labor unions, who feared a militarism which would be hostile to their interests; opposition on the part of school-teachers; and, most important of all, opposition on the part of the boys, who had their football, basket-ball, and track games, but had no notion whatsoever of national-defense games.

This opposition we answered in four ways:

To the schoolmaster we said: "We are going to develop fine boys for you. We are going to put a little stiffening into the American boy, make him more manly, and make him better material for you to work on educationally."

To the women's clubs, that is, to the mothers of the boys, we said: "We have a moral ideal in this work; we are going to encourage non-smoking and clean-thinking." And we did it.

To the labor unions we said: "We are working for national defense, and we promise you that this organization will have nothing

whatever to do with a state or a municipal police force. We are working solely for national defense, and we shall go no farther than that. This will be strictly American, and we shall have no caste idea in this program.

And so my work has been in the line of leadership as opposed to the caste idea. For instance, I am working under the Chicago school board now. In Chicago we have no officers; only leaders. We have no captains, colonels, and brigadier-generals among the boys. Instead, we have platoon, company, battalion, and perhaps regimental leaders, in the same way that on any railroad running into this city there is a chief train-dispatcher and an assistant train-dispatcher. We handle the system entirely without any idea of caste.

To the boys (and, after all, it is most important to make good with Mr. Boy; in the last analysis it is the boy's side of the work that really counts) we say: "You have your football, basket-ball, baseball, and track games. Now, Mr. Boy, why not go ahead with the national-defense game?" And we have given the boys fascinating national-defense games.

Our military instruction has been adapted to the game idea. We have taken the old lockstep, routine work out of military instruction, and we have adapted it to the game. The boy has definite contests to look forward to in all the phases of his instruction. It is high school against high school; we get all the dash and all the efficiency of the football team in our national-defense games. That is a fundamental principle of the Wyoming idea.

Starting with a very few boys in Cheyenne, in the course of a few years we developed the principles of what is now known as the Wyoming plan of military instruction in the secondary schools. Wyoming was, perhaps, the most difficult of all places in which to inaugurate that training. The high-school population is extremely small. The cities are very far apart, railroad communication is not the best. In order to make possible inter-high-school competition we had a most difficult problem to solve. I have not been in Wyoming for many months, and I do not know from first-hand information how the work is progressing. During these two years the boys have had no coach, no director, no one to look out for them; the

marvel is that the work has continued without anyone to instruct the boys. How in the world would you carry on Latin, or Greek, or history without a teacher? All the schools employ physical directors to carry along their athletic games; but the boys of Wyoming have managed of themselves to keep military training alive. That is indeed a wonderful test for the system.

I left the Wyoming schools and went to Washington a year ago. There we introduced some of the Wyoming features into the Washington high-school cadet organization, a body of some 27 cadet companies. Washington, D.C., has a high-school cadet organization thirty-five years old. It has existed continuously for thirty-five years. Why? Because it has been on the competitive principle. Heretofore there has been one big competition—the competitive drill at the end of every year. It is the competitive feature that has kept that organization on its feet, and has made it great. I believe that the Washington high schools have furnished more officers to the army, the navy, and the marine corps than any institution outside of the national academies.

We prescribe for the boys uniforms of cadet gray. We want our boys to take pride in their clothing, we desire to inculcate in them habits of neatness and cleanliness. Now a spot or two on dirt-colored khaki makes very little difference, but when uniforms are clean-looking cadet gray, inspected at every drill, it is quite easy to insist that each boy keep his uniform in fine condition, free from spots, grease, and dirt. Cadet gray is becoming; khaki and olive drab are not; the cadet uniform has never been departed from at West Point in favor of the army green or olive drab. A father and mother take greater pride in the lad if they see him coming home in an attractive-looking uniform. Moreover, cadet gray, which blends very well with the landscape, is an admirable field uniform as well as an attractive dress uniform. It is a great combination. Blue is a good dress uniform, but it soils easily and is not well suited for field work. The complete uniform consists of cap, blouse, and pants. Later, the boys will have to provide themselves with gaiters for field work.

In spite of the fact that the Chicago boy (and he is the kind of a boy I was—a poor boy) has to spend fifteen dollars for his uniform,

we anticipate that from 30 to 70 per cent of the boys in the different high schools are going to join of their own volition. There are 15,000 boys, roughly speaking, in the Chicago high schools. There are 21 high schools. You see the colossal job we have there. And yet, if uniforms are furnished free, I would promise 10,000 boys or be willing to resign my commission on the failure of my prediction. These boys would be from fourteen to nineteen years of age.

We work upon the following basis: My practical experience is opposed to making the military instruction in the high schools compulsory. Indeed, compulsion is not necessary. We can win Mr. Boy with our delightful national-defense games. I believe in making enlistment in our work elective; a boy can elect this class, or not, just as he sees fit; but once he has elected it for the year he must finish the work as in any elective class. Many subjects in the high-school curriculum are now elective, such as Latin, chemistry, history; we add a military course, attempting to make it as appealing as an attractive game. Thus we take into account boy psychology. Indeed, I believe that if uniforms were furnished free we could easily enroll 90 per cent of the boys. What then seems to be the importance of bothering with the remaining 10 per cent, especially as we might load our companies with spirit of the wrong sort. We desire to avoid the old lockstep spirit, and to substitute the spirit of competition.

Austin High School, Chicago, will have a very high proportion of boys going into the work. We have carefully explained to them that a fifteen-dollar uniform is indispensable. That restriction is a very great pity. A single concrete instance will explain why. Several years ago, in Wyoming, there was a boy who did not come in to take the cadet work, and yet I saw him in the gallery every day when we had drill. He was a fine lad: I knew the type of boy. One day I asked him, "Son, why don't you join the cadet corps?" He shuffled his feet and, boy like, said he did not want to. I pressed him further, and this is what he said: "Well, lieutenant, I have saved up my newspaper-route money to buy a uniform, but my mother is a washerwoman you know. She is sick and she has to have that money; so I can't join the cadets." Of course we were able to provide that boy with a uniform.

It is pretty hard for me to go to these Chicago boys and say, "Here, have you got fifteen dollars worth of patriotism?" Because fifteen dollars to the Chicago schoolboy is as big as the whole continent of America is to you.

Next fall we shall consider the question of training the girls. I feel satisfied that our nation is non-militaristic; that we have no desire for conquest of other people's territory. Hence, if war comes, we are going to be on the defensive. That implies that the people who attack us are going to be on the offensive, and that means that our country is going to be invaded. Now, invasion will mean a great movement of population from the seaboard to the central portion of the United States. Various sections of Europe have been invaded during the last two or three years. You, of course, have seen photographs of the refugees. There the women, the young girls, the children, and the men, all went helter-skelter, go-as-you-please, seeking safety and shelter. There was an utter lack of organization. Now, I believe that our high-school girls ought to be taught organization. They ought to be taught squads right and squads left; camp sanitation; how to organize large bodies of women and children, so that in the event of war in this country women can manage women and young girls. American women have a natural executive ability. They can handle masses of women better than the men. I think the men have failed in Europe in providing for the refugees, especially the young women and girls. I am opposed to giving our girls rifles and teaching them how to shoot. If the manhood of this country cannot defend its womanhood, we are in a very, very bad way. But I do see the necessity of this kind of training for girls—organization of units along military lines, camping, camp sanitation. Our girls should be taught the laws of war so that there would be no sniping on the part of the women of a community in the event of invasion. That brings a terrible penalty according to the laws of war.

I want to tell you of the interest on the part of "Mr. Boy" throughout the Middle West. He wants this work, and he wants it very badly. For instance, in Ottawa, Illinois, there are over a hundred boys who come three miles every week to their drill.

They start at 7:30 in the morning, before school. That means that the boys have to get up rather early to be able to eat their breakfasts and reach school on time. They have no instructor except a boy who had two weeks at Culver, last year, in the high-school camp; and yet this lad, because of his qualities of leadership and natural-born ability, has held that outfit together and is instructing them. It is a pity they have not a trained instructor and a shame that they have to buy their own uniforms.

I believe that the Wyoming plan has improved discipline in the schools, and has cut down the proportion of juvenile cases in the courts. It has tended to develop the boys physically, to develop them mentally, and to develop their character. In the troop-leadership game we have something very unusual. Here is a game in which boys are called upon to make decisions, and to make them promptly. It is an incomparable means of development to give a boy a problem in which he has to make promptly a decision which in his own mind is very important. Indeed, we think that our boys develop a rather true sense of manhood when we give them a man's game to play. War is a man's game.

It has been said that any attempted military discipline tends to destroy initiative, and that taking any kind of an order from those above him tends to make the boy receptive. That point of view is based upon an ignorance of our Wyoming plan. It rests on the idea that all there is in military training is squads right and squads left, the manual of arms, and the marching movements. We have, in addition thereto, the initiative developer in our map maneuver or troop-leadership game. In this the boys are given certain definite missions to perform; the side which best fulfils its mission is the winner. We are teaching a boy a great civic, as well as a great military, lesson when we teach him to remember his mission. If I, as a boy and as a young man at college, had always remembered my mission, I would be a much better man today.

Then, in a solution of these problems, initiative, resourcefulness, practical ability, are the great, main factors. So far from killing a boy's initiative, this Wyoming plan develops it to the highest degree.